

are the dark side of globalization, not nascent institutions of an alternative moral economy.

The strength of this book lies in the broad scope of its inquiry and a sensitive understanding of the problem of a distinctively Islamic society: 'The epistemological challenge was whether, by imagining an "Islamic society" in terms largely suggested by the dominant frameworks of social understanding emerging from the heartlands of capitalism's origin, the task of imagining, yet alone reconstituting, a distinctive Islamic sociability could ever be an autonomous endeavor ...' (p. 44). The utopia of a moral economy offered a foil for organizing the Muslim imaginings that Tripp's wide-ranging scholarship documents. But they float along a surface of imaginings that are not anchored in concrete political or institutional realities except in the segment of Chapter 4 dealing with Islamic finance. The imaginings need grounding in the fields of conflict that, like Napoleon's invasion for al-Jabarti, concentrated Muslim (and Christian Arab) imaginings in political realities. These realities in turn varied with the evolution of the concrete political units that evolved under colonial and postcolonial situations. Colonial dialectic took a variety of forms, depending on the original unit that was colonized, the degree to which the 'traditional' unit was preserved or transformed by colonial settlers, traders, investment bankers, or other forms of capitalist intrusion, the timing of penetration, and the social derivations of those elites who could articulate responses.

Tripp jumps across borders in pace with the contemporary dynamics of globalization but he has omitted analysis of the distinctive colonial and national pieces from which tapestries of Islamic and subsequently 'Islamist' responses were rewoven. If some Islamic anti-capitalists are now imaginatively escaping these colonial boundaries that divided the umma, the post-colonial states remain the principal fields in which the colonial dialectic continues to play, even as a further globalization of capitalist economies develops new fields for post-national imaginings. The intellectual framework of this study underestimates the durability of the nation-state framework that Western imperialism imposed upon the broader Middle East and as far afield as Indonesia. By focusing on capitalism, a sort of antiseptic economic realm, it escapes the full rigours of colonial dialectic. Hegel's slave needed not only imagination but also a hard work of subjection to the master's discipline in order to erode the bonds of domination and make the master dependent upon him, the slave. Without full assimilation of Western capitalist

production techniques and institutions the Islamist cannot achieve a fully autonomous 'Islamic society'. The Islamic anti-capitalist is just another of Hegel's stubborn slaves, caught in and reinforcing his chains of servitude. The narcissism of identity politics is just not up to mounting any serious response to the challenge of capitalism unless it can build Muslim transnational corporations and institutions.

The Islamist critics of capitalism who engage in Islamic finance, however, offer the possibilities of a distinctively Islamic synthesis whereby strategic parts of international finance are Islamized. Perhaps here, too, ideological myths prevail, supported by transaction costs of sharia arbitrage – a term coined by Mahmoud A. El-Gamal in his path-breaking *Islamic finance: law, economics, and practice* (Cambridge University Press, 2006) to describe the compromises of Islamic scholars splitting hairs over medieval juristic interpretations. Like George Sorel's myth of the general strike, Islamizing international finance remains out of reach but is a constructive moment in the dialectics of globalization that may integrate Islamic 'societies', a relatively recent discovery, into an emerging world order. Or will it perhaps self-destruct? To understand the nuances and gain a deeper appreciation of contemporary Islam's financial encounters with global capitalism, El-Gamal's book should be read alongside Tripp's masterful survey.

Global history: interactions between the universal and the local

By A. G. Hopkins, ed., Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.
Pp. xi + 303. Pbk. £18.99.
ISBN 1-4039-8793-9

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DOI: S1740022807226014

This collection of essays is one of what appears to be becoming a series of edited books on global history from A. G. Hopkins (the first was *Globalization in world history*; others are presaged in Hopkins' long introduction to this volume). What is most remarkable about the book under review is that all but one of the pieces in the volume were written by members of the same history department, at the University of Texas, Austin, and all but two of these were composed by junior faculty. It is a signal feat to get scholars of such diverse specialties to round on a particular topic,

no matter how broadly cast. One can only imagine the potential benefits of such an effort, both in terms of intra-departmental conversations and undergraduate teaching. It is also a smart way to get historians to connect disparate topics of interest and research with the growing literature on globalization and its histories. The range of perspectives presented, and the different angles of attack, give the book an edge that keeps the reader engaged.

In the Introduction, Hopkins lays out an ambitious framework for bundling up the essays. Deploying the term 'universal' as distinct from 'global' (global phenomena are not necessarily universal, he argues, because interactions among them may not be expressions of a quest for commonality), Hopkins wants to put the fictive claims of universals, said to be applicable to the world as a whole, into interaction with various localities in order to trace how universals get bent and appropriated in concrete, historical ways that sometimes help sustain, sometimes undermine, local cultures and practices. The exercise, as represented by these essays, leads him to the conclusion that there are no pristine universals: wherever they appear they 'bear the marks of the locality that produced them', thus pointing, not to a world of commonalities (which must also require exclusions), but towards a necessary toleration of difference – cosmopolitanism rather than universalism.

Inevitably, not all the essays in the collection hold to this overview. Roger Hart's excellent meditation on Hegel's universalism rightly treats 'modernity' and 'globalization' as ideological constructs claiming privileged knowledge of the putative outcome of historical processes and ends by warning against turning the local effects of global processes into manifestations of universal principles. It is never quite clear if universals are meant to be 'real' or imagined – or simply another word for the generalization of the west in its moment of ascendancy. And in practice, as well as through slips of the tongue, the contributors often elide universalism with globalization. As long as the focus is on ways localities manipulate or appropriate global forces (as in Erika Bsumek's close study of Navajo weaving) or on the interaction of the global and the local (as in Karl Miller's interesting links between the global marketing of phonographs and the discovery of 'local' music) or on the local uses of competing universal claims (as in Mark Lawrence's lucid and insightful examination of how leaders in the Vietnamese civil war used Cold War categories to specific ends), this is not a problem. The individual essays carry their own logic and make useful contributions.

But slipping universalism in as a replacement for the global lends an abstract tone to the discussion – universals, as fictive claims, are in the realm of ideology or ideas; local worlds appear, in contrast, as specific and material – in the realm of things. No doubt this helps in working against the recurrent imagery in globalization literature of the local as overwhelmed by global forces (in models of challenge and response, action and reaction); yet it tends to obscure the materiality of global forces themselves. There is, in short, a missing terrain of action. This becomes most evident in Mark Metzler's wonderful study of Listian economic ideas in Meiji Japan and more indirectly, in Tracie Matysik's account of the Universal Races Congress of 1911 and Geoffrey Schad's examination of self-determination in the Ottoman context.

In each of these essays, the authors see contending or rival universals: the sirens of free trade vs. nationally organized capital in Meiji Japan; the imperial transnationalism of the Ottoman Empire vs. the claims of national self-determination; the individually based agenda of human rights in the struggle against racism vs. a community of independent nations in the struggle against imperialism. That less universalist, more parochial, national solutions were adopted in each case certainly reflected local and regional conditions, but it also registered the terms of global competition. Friedrich List may be cast as a 'universalist' in his appreciation of the global significance of the industrial revolution, but while influenced by his sojourn in the US and influential in Germany after its unification, Metzler clearly shows that List's ideas came to Japan (in translation) well after free trade policies had been displaced by a new national agenda of self-mobilization and state-led industrialization. His ideas proved useful and were grafted onto policies already formulated, less from the realm of ideas than from realist calculations about what was required to survive in the global competition of world empires in the late nineteenth century. In the context of such empires, moreover, nationalist imaginings were the most powerful tool at hand for challenging colonial domination and its racial predicates. Again, nationalism as a global idiom of struggle arose, not so much from the realm of ideas, as from the material conditions of colonial empire in the early twentieth century. Indeed, it was precisely the crisis of colonial regimes – especially in the context of a global depression of the 1930s, the deepening impoverishment of agriculture in the context of the continuing extractions of empire, that opened the latent, and in many places, overt civil war between urban

centres and countryside which, worldwide, conditioned the struggles in the Cold War that, in turn, got overwritten by the claims of the competing universals of communism and capitalism. It is this middle ground – of the imperatives of survival in a global condition – that gets passed over in the framing of universalism vs. localism. Happily most of the essays are not constrained by this dichotomy and offer lucid and at times striking insights into the very material conditions of globality that shaped twentieth-century world history.

The empire strikes back? The impact of imperialism on Britain from the mid-nineteenth century

By Andrew Thompson. Harlow: Pearson Education, 2005. Pp. xviii + 374. £21.99. ISBN 0-582-43829-2

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The title of Andrew Thompson's book is misleading, reminiscent as it is of Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin's *The empire writes back* from 1989 – a title well established within the postcolonialist canon. But Thompson is no postcolonialist, and his book is intended to transcend what he sees as 'an increasingly sterile debate between "postcolonialists" (who maintain [the impact of empire] was prevalent and pervasive) and their critics (who are convinced that its influence has been grossly exaggerated)' (p. 9). The book is further directed against 'elements of both the Left and the Right [who] have long treated imperialism as an "unpleasant aberration" in British history' – exemplified by what Thompson sees as the 'Little Englandism' and 'the insular and romantic "people's history" of the History Workshop movement' (p. 1), and by the Indian 'historian' Ashis Nandy's belief that 'imperial attitudes were thoroughly internalised by the British' and worked to stifle 'the development of a more open and democratic society' (pp. 201, 223). On the positive side, *The empire strikes back?* situates itself within 'a self-consciously revisionist historiography of the 1980s and 1990s' which has aimed at offering 'a more expansive view of Britain's past' – as exemplified by the series edited by John Mackenzie for Manchester University Press on different aspects of British imperialism.

It is difficult to see in what sense Thompson's book is 'revisionist'. It adds to a long tradition of writing on the popularity or not of empire, and on the impact of imperialism on domestic politics, culture and society in Britain. This includes Mackenzie's *Propaganda and empire* (1986), but also Bernard Porter's *Critics of empire* (1968) and *The absent-minded imperialists* (2004) (neither of which are mentioned by Thompson – the latter coinciding with his book and covering similar ground). Further examples are Richard Price's *An imperial war and the British working class* (1972) and Raphael Samuel's three-volume collection on *Patriotism*, from 1989, whose contributions are not duly recognized.

The empire strikes back? is a richly varied survey, whose chapters take the form of interlinked essays on ways in which the context of empire made itself felt in the lives of different classes, in gender discourse, and in the socialization of the young. Other essays examine the influence of imperialism on domestic politics and trade unionism, its significance for 'Metropolitan Economics', and its impact on notions of British identity. Thompson gets through a lot of material and organizes it well by focusing his presentation on selected case comparisons, which allows him to go into detail and to make his account attractive for the readership of students, to whom it is primarily addressed.

Thompson is keen to make his narrative balanced, but his attempt at even-handedness makes his conclusions rather vacuous. When discussing the impact of imperialism on British politics, he observes that 'in the fashioning of a more democratic political culture, the empire arguably proved as much of a friend as a foe' (p. 154). And when it comes to the importance of the empire for the 'metropolitan' economy, 'the empire's economic impact was not "entirely negligible", neither was it decisive' (p. 178). Overall, '[t]he empire ... was a significant factor in the lives of the British people. It was not, however, all-pervasive' (p. 241). Thus – like Bernard Porter in *The absent-minded imperialists* – Thompson is certainly more on the playing-down than on the exaggerating side.

'Impact' is a difficult concept to work with, and the question is in what sense it can be quantified and measured in the manner Thompson's book implies. He mentions racism and notions of chauvinistic superiority as elements of British identity that may have been influenced by imperialism, but qualifies this by pointing out that 'national superiority' has been directed not only against colonial subject races, but also against Jews, French, Italians, and Portuguese (p. 186). Thompson also seems to argue against the